

**CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS  
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

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FILE NAME: 1 De La Salle  
DATE OF APPLICATION: May 19, 2002  
APPLICANT: De La Salle High School  
DATE OF HEARING: June 11, 2002  
HPC SITE/DISTRICT: St. Anthony Falls Historic District  
CATEGORY: contributing  
CLASSIFICATION: Certificate of Appropriateness  
STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Amy Lucas  
DATE: May 30, 2002

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**A. SITE DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND:**

De LaSalle High School started in 1900; the oldest remaining building faces West Island Avenue and was constructed in 1922. The 2 ½ story, red brick school building was designed by Damon, O'Meara and Hills of St. Paul for the Archdiocese of St. Paul. The De La Salle school complex covers approximately one block on Nicollet Island blocked by East Island Avenue, Eastman Avenue, West Island Avenue and Grove Street. The original brick school building faces East Island Avenue and the main entrance of the school faces Hennepin Avenue. The school's surface parking lot sits on the block in front of the school bounded by Eastman Avenue, East Island Avenue, West Island Avenue and Hennepin Avenue.

The original brick building has received numerous additions against the northern (rear) elevation. The high school is now housed in an attached (rear) two story, white brick building that was constructed in the 1960s. The main entrance to the school is in the center of the white brick high school which was refaced in March of 1999 with a dark red brick. The HPC also approved a minor elevator tower in March of 1999.

*St. Anthony Falls Rediscovered* notes that "during the 1920s and 1930s, all of the townhouses on Eastman Avenue, as well as most of the mansions on Grove Street were displaced by the expansion of De LaSalle High School and the encroachment of light industry."

**B. PROPOSED CHANGES:**

The applicant is proposing a gymnasium addition to the northeast side of the building. The gym is to the rear (Grove Street) side of the building and the addition will be placed behind the two story classroom building. One story of the gym will visible from the main (Hennepin Avenue) elevation above the classroom building. The side entrance/stair tower will also be visible from Hennepin Avenue.

The south elevation (facing Hennepin Avenue) behind the two story classroom building sits one floor above the two-story classroom addition and is connected to a three story school building. The visible elevation does not have windows and is predominantly faced with E.I.F.S. (a wallboard similar to stucco). This new addition measures 113' along Hennepin Avenue. The color of the E.I.F.S. material

will be presented at the hearing. The bottom section of the exposed wall is a cream brick (Brick #1 will be presented at the hearing) with a concrete water table and E.I.F.S. above. The cream color will match the connecting cream color of the 1960s school building addition. The side entrance caps the end of the building and is predominately a dark red brick (Brick #2 will be presented at the hearing); this red brick matches the 1999 facing of the school building and the original 1922 building.

The north elevation (facing Grove Street) will have four large windows (window sample will be presented at the public hearing) and will be predominately E.I.F.S. with the cream brick (Brick #1) in the vertical panels below the windows.

The east elevation (facing East Island Avenue), measuring 68" long, is predominately E.I.F.S. with dark red brick (Brick #2) wrapping the ends and a sign that reads: "L.L. Gray Gymnasium." The sign is individual letters measuring 21" tall and 27' long.

### **C. GUIDELINE CITATIONS:**

***The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation recommend:***

#### Additions:

- Placing functions and services required for the new use in non-character defining interior spaces rather than installing a new addition.
- Constructing a new addition so that there is the least possible loss of historic materials and so that character-defining features are not obscured, damaged, or destroyed.
- Locating the attached exterior addition at the rear or on an inconspicuous side of a historic building; and limiting its size and scale in relationship to the historic building.
- Designing new additions in a manner that makes clear what is historic and what is new.
- Considering the attached exterior addition both in terms of the new use and the appearance of other buildings in the historic district or neighborhood. Design for the new work may be contemporary or may reference design motifs from the historic building. In either case, it should always be clearly differentiated from the historic building and be compatible in terms of mass, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and color.
- Placing new additions such as balconies and greenhouses on non-character-defining elevations and limiting the size and scale in relationship to the historic building.
- Designing additional stories, when required for the new use, that are set back from the wall plane and are as inconspicuous as possible when viewed from the street.

### **St. Anthony Falls Historic District Guidelines:**

#### Under Nicollet Island (Masonry):

This area extends from Grove Street to the south end of Nicollet Island. It also extends north of Grove Street to approximately 150' north of the railroad tracks.

1. Siting: New buildings shall be constructed with principal elevations facing the street. Buildings moved onto Grove Street shall be in line with the Grove Street Flats.
2. Height: New buildings shall be one-to-two stories high, so that significant views are preserved. Overall building height not including chimneys shall be between 20 and 40 feet.
3. Rhythm of Projections: Projections, if provided, shall be limited to the lower 1-1/2 stories and the central portion or major subdivisions of the building.
4. Directional Emphasis: The existing buildings have no strong directional emphasis. Therefore, new buildings also shall have no strong emphasis.
5. Materials: New buildings shall be constructed of brick or limestone.
6. Nature of Openings: Openings should appear in a constant and repeated pattern across the principal facades. Window openings should be approximately 2 times as high as they are wide. Windows and doors should be set toward the front of the openings.
7. Roof Shapes: New roofs should be flat or nearly flat. Mansard roofs similar to the Grove Street Flats should be considered on a case-by-case basis.
8. Details: There are no special requirements.
9. Color: Primary surfaces of new buildings should be buff or grey. Trim should be subdued earth tones or flat black.

#### **Surface-applied Individual Letters:**

A surface-applied letter sign has individually-formed letters attached to the wall surface of the building.

- a. Size: letter size shall not exceed twelve (12) inches. The length is determined by the sign text and its relationship to the architectural features.
- b. Materials: suitable sign materials are metal, painted wood, and solid plastic with opaque matte finishes. Vacuum-formed plastic materials are not permitted.

#### **D. FINDINGS:**

1. The original school building falls within the period of significance for the St. Anthony Falls Historic District. The later additions are not contributing and the proposed gymnasium will be attached to the later additions.
2. The proposed addition follows The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. There is no loss of historic materials and the addition is placed to the inconspicuous rear of the building. The addition is also set back from the wall plane of the school building.

3. The proposed addition brings the school complex into a cohesive whole by continuing the 1960s cream color but ending with the dark red brick of the central entrance and the 1922 school building at the opposite end.
4. The proposed addition follows the St. Anthony Falls Historic District guidelines for siting, roof shape and color.
5. The St. Anthony Falls Historic District guidelines recommend a building height of two stories and the proposed addition is three stories. The existing school building is currently three stories and there is no historic context surrounding the school that would be diminished by a taller building. The three story height of the addition is compatible with this area of the historic district.
6. The proposed letter height for the signage is 21” and the sign guidelines recommend 12” high. The length of the sign is compatible with the size of the building as recommended.
7. The St. Anthony Falls Historic District guidelines recommend that window openings be vertical in scale. The window openings of the proposed addition are more square in form but are more compatible with the architecture of the existing school building. In this case, the building sits in an open area away from the historic fabric of Nicollet Island and square windows are appropriate for the school’s architectural style.
8. The St. Anthony Falls Historic District guidelines recommend that “openings should appear in a constant and repeated pattern across the principal facades.” Window openings are not proposed across the Hennepin Avenue elevation which is the principal façade.
9. The St. Anthony Falls Historic District guidelines recommend materials of new buildings be brick or limestone. Much of the school gymnasium addition will be clad in E.I.F.S. which is not a recommended material in the guidelines. The applicants have presented satisfactory brick colors of cream and dark red and are using these materials as accents due to cost considerations.

**E. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the HPC adopt staff findings and approve the C of A for the plans as proposed with the following conditions:

1. The proposed signage should follow the letter height size recommended in the guidelines.
2. The Hennepin Avenue elevation is a prominent elevation and E.I.F.S. should not be used. The use of E.I.F.S. should be limited to secondary elevations.
3. Window openings should be placed along the Hennepin Avenue elevation that is proposed as a blank wall.
4. Planning staff approval of the final plans with the Hennepin Avenue elevation changes is required for Certificate of Appropriateness approval.

**NOTE:** Additional supporting documents are available for viewing in the office of the City Clerk. For more information, please contact the Committee Coordinator.